

Living Shadow 119

Chapter 119 Blood Feud

The Wendigo tore through the forest in a frenzy, its erratic movements driven by the primal instincts of a mother desperate to protect her young.

Its powerful limbs carried it swiftly to the den, where it skidded to a halt, the heavy scent of blood saturating the air like a cruel omen.

A low growl escaped its throat, lacking its usual menace, replaced instead by a tinge of fear. With a blur of motion, it bolted into the cave, its glowing eyes scanning every corner.

There was nothing.

Only three pools of blood marked the ground where its offspring once rested. No bodies. No signs of a struggle. Just the unmistakable evidence of loss.

The creature crouched down, letting out a mournful whimper as its claws scraped against the stone floor. It sniffed at the blood, its desperate cries echoing softly within the cave.

Whimper. Whimper.

But the cries were met with silence.

Raising its head, the Wendigo caught faint traces of scent in the air forest mud and something else—human. A scent it recognized.

Its mournful whimpers turned into a guttural roar that reverberated through the forest, a chilling declaration of its rage and sorrow. Its menacing eyes burned with murderous intent as it bolted from the cave, a blur of fury charging through the trees.

Far off in the distance, Damon sprinted through the forest, the straps of his Omnidirectional Gear taut as he propelled himself forward. His body enhanced moved with precision, his speed boosted with [5x].

He had left a wide berth between himself and the Wendigo, but even with his head start, he knew it wouldn't be long before the enraged creature caught up.

He was halfway to the river when the Wendigo's desperate, bone-chilling roar echoed across the forest. The sound sent a shiver down his spine, but Damon's lips curled into a cold smile.

"Now you know how I felt losing my potion," he muttered under his breath, his dark eyes narrowing with grim satisfaction.

Swinging through the trees, Damon moved swiftly, the wind rushing past him as his Shadow Perception activated. The river's shimmering surface came into view ahead, but then he felt it—the Wendigo entering the edge of his range.

Damon's smirk faltered as he sensed the sheer speed of the creature closing in.

"By the goddess, that monster is fast..."

The difference in power was staggering. A first-rank creature like the Wendigo was leagues beyond anything Damon had fought before. It was like comparing a human to a charging bull elephant—there was no contest in raw strength.

Magic might level the playing field, but monsters like the Wendigo were no strangers to magic. Many had natural defenses against it, and some could wield it themselves.

Damon gritted his teeth, focusing on the path ahead as he closed the distance to the riverbank. He wasn't ready for a direct fight, not yet—but he didn't need to win today.

Today was about revenge.

Damon dropped from the tree, landing with practiced precision as the Wendigo's enraged screeches tore through the air behind him. He didn't look back. After a grueling week of laying traps and near-death experiences in this evil forest, the terrain was second nature to him now.

He bolted toward the barrier, his muscles burning with exertion, his focus razor-sharp despite the sound of the Wendigo crashing through the undergrowth, closing in fast. Damon could almost feel its hot, rancid breath on his back, but he forced down the creeping dread.

Remorseless had long been activated.

The numbing calm of the skill kept his fear at bay as he dove toward the barrier, rolling across the ground and coming to a stop, panting heavily. Cold sweat dripped down his mud-covered face as he scrambled to his feet.

The Wendigo didn't slow. It rammed into the barrier at full force, a deafening crack ringing out as black smoke billowed from where its flesh met the protective magic. The creature howled, its monstrous voice carrying an edge of agony.

"Raaaahhh... tsyvh... ggrah!"

Its desperate cries filled the night, but Damon remained unfazed, his cold eyes watching the scene unfold. The Wendigo's menacing gaze locked onto him, its eyes bloodshot and glinting with a raw, primal emotion.

Damon bit his lip. There was something hauntingly familiar in those eyes. For a brief moment, a memory flickered in his mind—the piercing gray eyes of his mother, filled with worry when he didn't return home one evening after playing in the woods until nightfall.

The resemblance was uncanny.

"Good," Damon muttered under his breath, forcing himself to focus. "Now I know I actually hurt you. You won't forget me after this."

The Wendigo roared again, slashing at the barrier with its long, razor-sharp claws. Each swipe left behind a bloody streak until the claws themselves shattered into broken stumps, dripping crimson.

Damon stood silently, arms crossed, waiting for the creature to finish its pitiful attempts. Minutes passed, and when it finally stopped, bloody and heaving, he smirked.

"Thanks for the show," he said, his voice dripping with mockery. "Now it's my turn."

He untied the severed head of the infant Wendigo from his waist and let it drop to the ground with a dull thud.

"You're probably wondering what happened to their bodies, aren't you?" he taunted. "Don't worry. I'll show you—"

Before he could finish, the sharp sound of wings flapping caught his attention. A black raven swooped down from behind him, landing beside the severed head. Its beady eyes glinted as it pecked at the infant's face, tearing out an eye before retreating to a nearby tree to devour its prize.

Damon sighed heavily.

"Croft... I was in the middle of something." His tone was both exasperated and resigned.

"You didn't help at all this time, so why are you getting a reward?"

The raven ignored him, happily feasting on its gruesome meal.

Damon coughed, trying to regain his momentum. "Ahem. Where was I?"

He turned back to the Wendigo, his voice colder now.

"This is what happens when you cross me. I can't kill you yet, but I'll be back. When I reach my first-class advancement..."

He pointed a dagger at the creature.

"I'll make you pay."

With a flick of his wrist, Damon's shadow extended toward the infant Wendigo's head, enveloping it in darkness before devouring it completely. But no notification came from his system.

The Wendigo howled in agony, its voice a guttural mix of sorrow and rage. It slammed its bloody stumps against the barrier, its visceral hatred palpable.

Damon stared at the creature, his expression hard, though a flicker of doubt crept into his mind. Did I go too far... again?

But he shoved the thought aside. Murder had become second nature since killing Lark. The brief guilt he'd felt back then had long faded. Now, the lives he took—human or otherwise—were just stepping stones.

"You started this, and I'll finish it," he said, his voice steady. "Don't forget my name, Damon Grey. I'll be the last face you ever see."

The Wendigo glared at him, its gaze burning with an intensity that promised it would never forget.

Damon returned the look, committing the creature's face to memory. This wasn't just a fight anymore. It was a blood feud, a grudge that wouldn't end until one of them was dead.

After a long, tense silence, Damon turned and left. The Wendigo didn't follow, remaining at the barrier, its rage simmering as it watched him disappear into the darkness.

'Fair enough,' Damon thought as he made his way back. 'I did kill its kids, after all.'

He smirked, though his body ached from the week's grueling ordeal. Rest was his priority now—his mid-semester evaluation loomed on the horizon.

"This is my chance to finally get rid of the 'weakest' label," he muttered to himself, a hint of excitement creeping into his voice.

Still, guilt nagged at the edges of his mind. Whatever he was planning next, it was bound to be even worse.